



**Broadcast Educational Media Commission
Engineering and Broadcast Operations Committee
Meeting Minutes
2470 North Star Road, Columbus, OH 43221
July 14, 2022**

- I. **Call to Order:** At 1:03 p.m., Mr. Dole opened the meeting of the Broadcast Educational Media Commission Broadcast and Engineering Operations committee.

- A. **Roll Call:** At 1:03 p.m., roll call was conducted by Mrs. Gage.

Members Present:

Committee Chairman Matt Dole
Commissioner Christine Merritt

Members Absent:

Commissioner Geoffrey Andrews

Also Present in the Meeting:

Executive Director Geoffrey A. Phillips;
Craig Stevenson, Chief of Engineering and Broadcast Operations Officer;
Alina Gage, Chief Financial Officer;
Ronnie Agnew, General Manager of WOSU;
Tom Cummings, Director of Engineering and Technology of WBGU;
Mike Meadows, Director of Technology of WOSU;
and Noah Blundo, Hannah News

Also Present Virtually:

Eric Wortman, Engineering Manager;
Josh Sorden, Broadcast Operations Manager;
Laura Bryson, Chief Information Officer;

and Interested Citizens:

Robert Smith, Chairman of the Broadcast Educational Media Commission;
Kitty Lensman, President and General Manager of WPTD/WCET/WPTO;
Tina Hebel, Senior Manager of ThinkTV/WCET;
Mark Brewer, General Manager of WOUB;
Marlon Kiser, President and CEO of WGTE;
Dan Niedzwiecki, Chief Engineer of WGTE;
Trina Cutter, President and CEO of Western Reserve Public Media;
Dan Shellenbarger, General Manager of Ohio Governmental Telecommunications;
David Carwile, Administrator of Ohio Educational Television Stations, Inc;
John Luff, Television Technology Consultant;
And Willy Halla, HA Design

B. Committee Action Items:

Resolution 23-01: Motion to Approve April 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes

1:05 p.m. – Mr. Dole moved for approval of the April 14, 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Merritt seconded. The motion passed via unanimous roll call vote.

II. Overview of Advance Materials

- A. Ex. Dir. Phillips provided an overview of the advance materials shared prior to the meeting and available on the website (title, content, and author of each).

III. BEMC Master Control Overview

- A. Mr. Stevenson expressed appreciation for the stations participation in the process and provided a brief overview of the implementation of BEMC Joint Master Control (JMC). He followed by explaining BEMC's focus is now on replacing components and enhancing infrastructure.
- B. Mr. Sorden gave an overview of the operations of the JMC. He shared a photo of the JMC, explained components of it, and stated it is a 24/7/365 operation. Each shift has 2 operators and one media manager.
1. The discrepancy report was displayed and explained. June 2022 had 362 tickets documented and 15 tickets provided on-air issues. The other 347 were of an informational nature (log adjustments, playlist updates...). June 2022 had a 99.99% accuracy rate for all Ohio channels serviced by the JMC. Human error accounted for 0.001% (or 20 minutes). Feed errors were 0.004% (or 76 minutes).
 2. A table was shown detailing the channels serviced by the JMC for participating stations. Twenty (20) channels are fully serviced. Five (5) channels are locally serviced by respective stations. BEMC provides internet, connection, and feeds to several channels, including the Emergency Alert Service.
 - i. Ms. Merritt asked if the JMC equipment is required to provide these services. Mr. Stevenson affirmed.
 3. Another list was shared showing stations not using the JMC. JMC does provide 24/7/365 feed of the Ohio Channel to those stations. These stations do maintain other involvement with the JMC (shown on slide).
 4. Mr. Sorden addressed the issue of media storage raised by some stations and stated BEMC is not close to reaching the storage capacity of the system. 1,387 new programs were acquired in June 2022. Programs are searchable in BEMC systems Pro-Track and Cinegy. BEMC has 88,299 pieces of media stored and ready to be aired. 37,576 programs are available in the shared program media files including some older educational programming. Policy is to hold on to media until broadcast rights expire, essentially fulfilling an archive role for media. VyVx service allows for live feeds from stations to be received from any interested party (stations, networks...), and was extensively used during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic by the governor's office.
- C. Mr. Wortman spoke about 4 service areas of the engineering staff.
1. Service and communication – engineering staff is available around the clock for BEMC and participating stations. A ticketing system is used for tracking. To date 26,000 tickets have been logged. Quarterly engineering meetings occur with stations.

2. Redundancy – backbone redundancy includes diverse paths for fiber connections. Connecting cities is the start, but connections to the stations are required (last mile connections). Diverse last mile paths are important to allow service to continue despite local issues (bridge collapse in Maumee, cut fiber in Portsmouth...).
3. Platform modernization – needed to grow, change, and upgrade for the long term. Platform runs on Windows and allows for quick response to current landscape. Modernization allows for easier issue resolution (time change in spring/fall) and additional support (Nielsen support, broadcast logging...). Replacement and upgrades include storage replacement, encoding/decoding platform, and workstations/servers.
4. Flexibility allows BEMC to adapt to changes (file delivery systems, streaming, real-time delivery changes, and transcoding). BEMC is the only JMC in the country which can offer real-time delivery changes.

IV. User Survey Response Discussion

- A. Mr. Dole stated a survey was sent to JMC participating stations. He invited Mr. Shellenbarger (Ohio Government Telecommunications - OGT) to share thoughts.
 1. Mr. Shellenbarger stated OGT would not be possible without the JMC. OGT has two people in the traffic department and would not be able to function off-hours without JMC support. JMC enables OGT to survive.
 2. Mr. Dole asked about the support received while increasing the committee coverage at the Statehouse. Mr. Shellenbarger said the JMC enabled OGT to increase that coverage.
 3. Ms. Merritt asked where he saw the business going next. He replied he was interested in the ATSC 3.0 change to expand OGT channels. He also shared he is looking into the possibility of a new Nielsen study for OGT viewership.
- B. Mr. Dole continued by asking survey respondents to contribute additional statements.
 1. Tom Cummings, of WBGU, stated all three WBGU channels are serviced by JMC and is happy with the service received. Lately, issues have been caused by WBGU. He participated in the original RFP process and there are many other things involved in the process than stated by Mr. Sorden and Mr. Wortman. He appreciates the complexity of the process involved in the JMC process. Broadcasting process hasn't changed too much; how the broadcast is distributed has (streaming). ATSC 3.0 is still in the planning stages for WBGU. When the JMC was implemented, there were bumps in the road, but those were expected. There were individuals that were reluctant to use the BEMC in the beginning and now they appreciate the service provided.
 - i. Ms. Merritt asked where Mr. Cummings sees broadcasting going. He replied that it would be feasible for broadcasting to be streaming only (how the viewer receives the programming).
 2. Mr. Agnew of WOSU stated he is familiar with the concept of JMC with his experience in Mississippi. If WOSU did not have the service, fundraising would have to occur ("put all our eggs in the BEMC basket"). Mr. Meadows shared that at the onset of BEMC, WOSU had to make a choice to replace their aging equipment or use the JMC. BEMC has been receptive to station requests and the monitoring is appreciated. ATSC 3.0 will be the future, but without a mandate there is no consumer demand for it. BEMC's decision to use IP based service was forward thinking. WOSU relies on BEMC for all services.

- i. Mr. Dole asked about the changes suggested in the survey. Mr. Meadows stated he thinks they are attainable, mostly due to the quarterly engineering meeting. It is anticipated WOSU will be more vocal with the requested changes now that the move to the new WOSU facility is complete. Ex. Dir. Phillips shared some of the suggestions by WOSU are already in the pipeline with PBS.
 - ii. Ex. Dir. Phillips asked Mr. Agnew what Mississippi was paying for JMC services in that state. He stated it was about \$750,000 and was surprised Ohio JMC is free for stations to use.
3. Ms. Lensman of ThinkTV/WCET said they use JMC for half of their channels. She shared the distribution of OGT programming is very valuable. ThinkTV/WCET uses JMC as a backup master control and finds the library very useful. Ms. Hebel stated she has used the BEMC in some fashion for 40 years and is very satisfied with the service received, the vast library, and responsiveness of the BEMC.
 - i. Mr. Dole asked how the decision was made which channels were locally maintained and which ones would be serviced by BEMC. She stated it was based in interstitials. Primary channels were maintained for local control.
4. Mr. Kiser of WGTE stated the system is now reliable and is looking into using BEMC JMC as a backup master control. He stated he does not see a path forward with ATSC 3.0.
 - i. Ms. Merritt asked about the timeline to transition for resuming local master control services. He said no sooner than 6 months.
5. Ms. Merritt asked if there are other things not discussed that the committee should know. Mr. Cummings stated the path forward is what the channels need. Stations need to have a longer-term view of needs because funds are not always immediately available when decisions to take on additional channels or services are made.
 - i. Mr. Agnew asked if there is an effort by BEMC to recruit other stations not using the JMC. Mr. Dole responded the next meeting will be to discuss the reasons stations declined the JMC service.
6. Mr. Smith asked if a redundant JMC is a requirement or luxury for stations. Ms. Lensman stated redundancy is a requirement. Mr. Smith clarified all stations use the JMC – some as a primary and some as a backup service. Ms. Lensman affirmed this.

V. **Develop Date for Next Meeting**

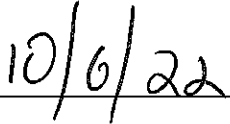
- A. Mr. Dole talked about the next meeting dates. Mr. Phillips recommended the meeting with stations not using the JMC occur in September 2022. A survey will be sent to the committee members for their preference.

VI. Adjournment

Resolution 23-02: Motion for Adjournment: 2:45 p.m. –Ms. Merritt moved to adjourn.
Mr. Dole seconded. The adjournment motion passed via unanimous roll call vote.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Dole", written over a horizontal line.

Matt Dole, Committee Chairman
Engineering and Broadcast Operations
Broadcast Educational Media Commission

A handwritten date "10/6/22" in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Date